

Message Text

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2:

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 CU-02

OMB-01 /060 W

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P R 111015Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2853

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 0036

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT

SUBJECT: STUDENT TROUBLES

REF: TRIPOLI 0014, TRIPOLI 0033

1. IN AN OBVIOUS ATTEMPT TO STEM RUMORS CIRCULATING ABOUT THE STUDENT VIOLENCE AND DEMONSTRATIONS IN BENGHAZI LAST WEEK, THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION RELEASED A STATEMENT ON THE SUBJECT ON JANUARY 11. HE DENIES REPORTS BY "SOME FOREIGN NEWS AGENCIES" THAT A NUMBER OF STUDENTS WERE KILLED DURING THE "EVENTS OF BENGHAZI UNIVERSITY LAST WEEK". WHAT HAPPENED AT THE UNIVERSITY DID NOT LEAD TO THE DEATH OF ANY LIBYAN STUDENT, HE ASSERTS, THERE WAS NO "MASSACRE", AND NO STUDENT IS NOW UNDER ARREST. THERE WAS A DEMONSTRATION "RELATING TO THE SELECTION OF THE STUDENT UNION AT BENGHAZI UNIVERSITY", AND AN INVESTIGATION IS UNDERWAY INTO WHAT HAPPENED.

2. DESPITE THIS, THERE ARE VERY PERSISTENT AND STRONG REPORTS OF DEATHS DURING THE DEMONSTRATIONS, AND THERE DEFINITELY WAS SHOOTING AT THE UNIVERSITY.

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ESTIMATES OF THOSE KILLED RANGE FROM SIX TO TEN, WITH

MANY INJURED. ONE VERSION OF EVENTS WE HAVE HEARD IS THAT DURING A TUMULTUOUS STUDENT MEETING OVER THE CHOICE OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES, STUDENTS DISCOVERED SECRET POLICE AGENTS ON THE CAMPUS, AND BEAT SEVERAL OF THEM TO DEATH. THIS LED TO REPRISALS BY THE POLICE, DURING WHICH STUDENTS WERE INJURED, AND TO A VIOLENT DEMONSTRATION THE FOLLOWING DAY IN DOWNTOWN BENGHAZI DURING WHICH THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE ARAB SOCIALIST UNION WAS ATTACKED AND BROKEN INTO. DEMONSTRATORS WERE REPORTEDLY CARRYING PLACARDS WITH PICTURE OF EX-KING IDRIS AND CYRENAICAN HERO OMAR AL-MUKHTAR. THERE ARE REPORTS OF MORE DEATHS DURING THESE DEMONSTRATIONS, AND THERE WERE CERTAINLY EXPLOSIONS IN THE CITY. THE STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION THAT NO LIBYAN STUDENTS WERE KILLED IS CAREFULLY WORDED, AND LEAVES OPEN THE POSSIBILITY OF THAT POLICE AND PERSONS OTHER THAN STUDENTS WERE KILLED.

3. IT APPEARS THAT THE REGIME IS TAKING A CONCILIATORY LINE ON THE DEMONSTRATIONS. ONE OF THE DEMANDS OF STUDENTS AT TRIPOLI UNIVERSITY, WHO WERE STRIKING LAST WEEK IN SYMPATHY WITH THE BENGHAZI STUDENTS, WAS THAT ALL ARRESTED STUDENTS BE RELEASED, AND IF WE BELIEVE THE STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION, THIS HAS BEEN DONE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ONE INJURED STUDENT IS BEING FLOWN TO LONDON FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT ACCOMPANIED BY A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FOREIGN MINISTRY.

4. ONE MILITARY OFFICER MADE WHAT APPEARED TO BE A SPECIAL EFFORT TO CONTACT AN EMBASSY OFFICER OVER THE WEEKEND AND TO PASS ON HIS CONCERN OVER THE VIOLENCE. HE CLAIMED THAT THE ARMED FORCES HAVE BEEN PUT ON SOME FORM OF ALERT, BUT WE HAVE NO CONFIRMATION OF THIS; IN ANY CASE, THIS HAPPENS FREQUENTLY, AND IS NOT NECESSARILY A SIGN OF SERIOUS TROUBLE.

5. QADHAFI IS CONTINUING TO PRESIDE OVER THE NATIONAL CONGRESS MEETINGS, AND IS IN EXCELLENT FORM.
CARLE

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